AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #107

BOOK ONE: WATER
CHAPTER SEVEN: "Winter Solstice part 1: The Spirit World"

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ACT ONE

EXT. SKY - DAY

Appa soars through the sky, with all the kids and Momo aboard. The scenery far below is quite beautiful. In addition to the natural beauty of the landscapes below them, they fly over clouds with interesting shapes.

KATARA
Those clouds look so soft, don't they? Like you could just jump down and you'd land in a big, soft, cottony heap.

SOKKA
Maybe you should give it a try.

KATARA
You're hilarious.

AANG
I'll try it!

Aang jumps off of Appa, and FALLS.

AANG (CONT'D)
(EXCITED SCREAMS) Yeah

Appa BANKS around and DIVES quickly. Aang rapidly approaches a huge, white fluffy cloud -- and falls right through it, as if it wasn't even there. Then Appa swoops under him, catching him. Aang is SOAKED, dripping wet.

AANG (CONT'D)
Turns out, clouds are made of water.

Katara notices something on the horizon.

KATARA
Hey, what is that?

As Appa flies toward it, we see what looks like a HUGE BLACK SCAR in the landscape.

SOKKA
It's like a scar...

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - DAY

Appa lands in a burned down forest. Everything is blackened. The few burned trunks still standing have few or no limbs. We can hear a scary, hollow-sounding wind blowing through.

The kids dismount and look around -- they all look upset by this. Aang looks particularly devastated.

SOKKA
Listen. It’s so quiet. There’s no life anywhere.

Katara approaches Aang to comfort him.

KATARA
Aang, are you okay?

Aang does not respond at all, completely lost in his thoughts. Everyone is quiet for a moment. Sokka notices some heavy BOOT PRINTS.

SOKKA
(RE: bootprints, angry)
Fire nation! Those evil savages make me sick. They have no respect for--

KATARA
(SHUSHES HIM)

SOKKA
(whispering)
What, I’m not allowed to be angry?

She points to Aang, still taking everything in. He sits down, and begins to speak quietly.

AANG
Why would anyone do this?

A beat.

AANG (CONT’D)
How could I let this happen?

KATARA
Aang, you didn’t let this happen. It has nothing to do with you.

AANG
Yes it does. It’s the Avatar’s job to protect nature... but I don’t know how to do my job.

KATARA
That’s why we’re going to the North Pole... to find you a teacher.

AANG
Yeah, a Waterbending teacher. But there's no one who can teach me how to be the Avatar. Monk Gyatso said that Avatar Roku would help me.

SOKKA
The Avatar before you? He died over a hundred years ago, how are you supposed to talk to him?

AANG
I don't know.

Another beat, Aang looking sad. Then Momo walks up to Aang. He climbs in Aang's lap, and Aang gently pats his head.

EXT. NATURAL SPRINGS - SIMULTANEOUS

Uncle Iroh's CLOTHING lies in a heap by some bushes.

ZUKO (O.S.)
Uncle, it's time to leave, where are you? Uncle Iroh!

Zuko emerges from the bushes, and sees the clothing.

UNCLE IROH (O.S.)
Over here!

ZUKO
Uncle?

Zuko looks up to see his Uncle, sitting neck deep in a steaming natural hot spring.

ZUKO (CONT'D)
We need to move on. We're closing in on the Avatar's trail, and I don't want to lose him.

UNCLE IROH
You look tired, Prince Zuko. Why don't you join me in these hot springs and soak away your troubles.

ZUKO
My troubles cannot be soaked away. It's time to go!

UNCLE IROH
You should take your teacher’s advice and relax a little. The temperature’s just right, I heated it myself.

Uncle does a little Firebending move to show how he heated the water. More steam rises off the water.

ZUKO
Enough! We need to leave now! Get out of the water.

UNCLE IROH
Very well...

Uncle begins to get out of the water, but Zuko sees he is naked, and looks away.

ZUKO
On second thought, why don’t you take another few minutes. But be back at the ship in half an hour, or I’m leaving without you!

Uncle Iroh settles back into the water, and closes his eyes.

UNCLE IROH
Ahh...

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - LATER

Aang still sits quietly, looking sad.

KATARA
Hey Aang, are you ready to be cheered up?

AANG
(without looking up)
No.

Katara throws an acorn at him. It bounces off Aang’s head.

AANG (CONT’D)
Ow! Hey! How is that cheering me up?

SOKKA
(laughing)
It cheered me up.

Katara pegs Sokka with an acorn too.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Yeah, I probably deserved that.

Katara sits down next to Aang, and holds up the acorn she just threw at him.

KATARA
These acorns are everywhere, Aang.

Momo finds one and picks it up and smells it.

KATARA (CONT'D)
That means the forest will grow back! Every one of these will be a tall oak tree someday. And all the birds and animals that lived here will come back.

Aang smiles. Katara puts the acorn into his hand.

AANG
Thanks, Katara.

Suddenly, they notice an OLD WANDERER standing nearby watching them. The kids are STARTLED.

SOKKA
Hey, who are you?

The old wanderer ignores Sokka, and stares at Aang.

OLD WANDERER
When I saw the flying bison, I thought it was impossible. But those markings... are you the Avatar, child?

Aang looks to Katara, not sure what to say. She nods. Aang looks back to the wanderer, and smiles.

OLD WANDERER (CONT'D)
My village desperately needs your help!

EXT. VILLAGE - EARLY EVENING

It's a small village with a large central hall surrounded by several houses. The village shows signs of damage and makeshift repair.

Villagers cautiously PEER out of their windows, as Aang, Katara, and Sokka are led into the village by the old man.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The LEADER of the village looks up from his desk.

OLD WANDERER
This young person is the Avatar!

LEADER
So the rumors of your return are true. It is the greatest honor of a lifetime to be in your presence.

The leader BOWS to Aang.

AANG
Nice to meet you too.

There is a beat, as the leader smiles at Aang. Everyone waits for the leader to speak.

AANG (CONT'D)
So... is there something I can help you with?

LEADER
(leery)
I'm not sure.

OLD WANDERER
(to leader)
Our village is in crisis, he's our only hope!

The leader NODS, still a bit reluctant.

OLD WANDERER (CONT'D)
For the last few days, at sunset a spirit monster comes and attacks our village. He is "Hei Bai," the black and white spirit.

SOKKA
Why is it attacking you?

LEADER
We do not know. But each of the last three nights, he has abducted one of our own. We are especially fearful because the winter solstice draws near.

KATARA
What happens then?

OLD WANDERER
As the solstice approaches, the natural world and the spirit world grow closer and closer, until the line between them is blurred completely.

LEADER
Hei Bai is already causing devastation and destruction. Once the solstice is here, there is no telling what will happen.

AANG
So... what do you want me to do, exactly?

OLD WANDERER
Who better to resolve a crisis between our world and the spirit world, than the Avatar himself! You are the great bridge between man and spirits!

AANG
(unsure)
Right. That’s me.

KATARA
Hey great bridge guy, can I talk to you over here for a second?

The leader and the old man continue to discuss their situation, as Katara pulls Aang aside.

KATARA (CONT’D)
Aang, you seem a little unsure about all this.

AANG
Yeah, that might be because I don’t know anything at all about the spirit world.

Sokka and Katara look worried.

AANG (CONT’D)
It’s not like there’s someone to teach me this stuff!

KATARA
So... can you help these people?

AANG
I have to try, don’t I? Maybe whatever I have to do will just “come to me”.

Katara looks at Aang for a beat.

KATARA
I think you can do it, Aang.

Sokka nods.

SOKKA
Yeah... we’re all going to get eaten by a spirit monster.

EXT. NATURAL SPRINGS - SUNSET

Iroh has fallen asleep where he reclines in the spring.

UNCLE IROH
(SNORING NOISES)

A twig SNAPS, waking Iroh suddenly.

UNCLE IROH (CONT’D)
(STARTLED AWAKE NOISE) Who’s there?

He looks around, cocking an eyebrow, and listening very closely. But he hears nothing. Then a VOLE scurries toward him, and he relaxes his guard.

UNCLE IROH (CONT’D)
A meadow vole, I should have known! You startled me, little one. (SIGHS) Seems I’ve dozed off and missed my nephew’s deadline. But it was a very sweet nap.

He SMILES. Suddenly, the vole runs away. Huge ROCKS rise up all around Uncle, and HOVER near him, menacingly. We widen to reveal he is surrounded by four EARTHBENDERS. One of them holds up Uncle Iroh’s clothing.

EARTHBENDER SOLDIER #1
(re: clothing)
He’s a fire nation soldier!

Their CAPTAIN steps forward.

CAPTAIN
He’s no ordinary soldier. This is the Fire Lord’s brother. The Dragon of the West, the once great General Iroh. But now he’s our prisoner.

Off of Iroh’s reaction.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - SUNSET/DUSK

As the sun sets, Aang waits anxiously in the center of the village.

AANG
Hello? Spirit? Can you hear me? This is the Avatar speaking. I’m here to try to help stuff.

Nothing. He turns and SHRUGS to Katara and Sokka, who are watching him from a window in the Village Hall.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - SIMULTANEOUS

Katara and Sokka watch Aang through the window. Many villagers have assembled in the town hall. They huddle close together in fear. The leader and the old wanderer are close by, also waiting anxiously.

SOKKA
This isn’t right. We can’t sit here and cower while Aang waits for some monster to show up.

OLD WANDERER
If anyone can save us, he can.

SOKKA
He still shouldn’t have to face this alone.

Momo scurries up to the window, and looks out at Aang.

EXT. VILLAGE - SIMULTANEOUS

Aang watches as the last sliver of sun drops below the horizon.

AANG
The sun is set. Where are you, Hei Bai?

Beat.

AANG (CONT'D)
Well, spirit, uh... I hereby ask you to please leave this village in peace!

He raises both hands in the air to mark his decree. He claps twice. Another beat, nothing. He lowers his arms.

AANG (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Okay. Well, I guess that's settled then.

He turns to walk back towards the village hall. Behind him, near the outskirts of the village, a huge black and white spirit monster MATERIALIZES.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Aang turns to see the huge black and white spirit monster. It's scary, but Aang tries to remain calm.

AANG
You must be the Hei Bai spirit. My name is--

The spirit REARS UP and ROARS, interrupting him.

AANG (CONT'D)
My name is Aang. I'm the Avatar, and I would like to help... hey, wait up!

The spirit ignores Aang, and begins stomping through the village, destroying things as it goes with swipes of its long menacing limbs. (NOTE: The spirit moves with great speed - in quick, strange, blurred bursts. A combination of strobing and dissolving, followed by a few seconds of normal movement.)

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Katara and Sokka watch Aang through the window. The old wanderer and the village leader also watch.

LEADER
The Avatar's methods are unusual.

SOKKA
It doesn't seem too interested in what he's saying. Maybe we should go help him.

OLD WANDERER
No. Only the Avatar stands a chance against the Hei Bai.

KATARA
(reassuring, to Sokka)
Aang will figure out the right thing to do, Sokka.

EXT. VILLAGE - SIMULTANEOUS

Aang tries to follow the spirit monster, and continues to try to address it politely.

AANG
(as he follows behind it)
Please, would you stop destroying things, and listen? I'm just trying to do my job as spirit bridge. Excuse me? Would you please turn around?

The monster still ignores him. Aang tries a new tack.

AANG (CONT'D)
(forceful)
I command you to turn around now!

The monster whips around quickly, SWIPING Aang and flinging him back about twenty feet. Aang cushions his acrobatic landing with some Airbending.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - SIMULTANEOUS

Sokka sees this.

SOKKA
That's it, he needs help...

Before anyone can stop him, he rushes out the door.

KATARA
Sokka, wait!

She begins to follow him, but the leader RESTRAINS her.

LEADER
It's not safe!

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

The spirit monster continues smashing up houses, turning over carts, etc.

SOKKA
Hei Bai, over here!

Sokka HURLS his boomerang at the spirit monster. It hits, but the monster does not react. Sokka RUNS towards the monster and Aang.

AANG
Sokka, go back!

But Sokka runs all the way to Aang.

SOKKA
We'll fight him together, Aang.

AANG
I don't want to fight him unless I--

Just then, the monster SEIZES Sokka. It turns, and FLEES into the woods, carrying Sokka. Aang, panicked, whips out his glider and takes off after them.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - SIMULTANEOUS

Katara wrenches herself free from the leader. She runs outside.

KATARA
Sokka!

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

She runs to the outskirts of the village where the monster, Sokka, and Aang just took off into the dark woods. She STOPS, just as the village leader catches up with her. She turns around to see the old wanderer and other villagers looking at her sadly.

EXT. NATURAL SPRINGS - NIGHT

Zuko and one of his FIREBENDER soldiers return to the spring where they last saw Uncle Iroh bathing. But when they get there, he's not there.

ZUKO
Uncle? Uncle, where are you?

FIREBENDER
Sir, maybe he thought you left without him.

Zuko surveys the area.

ZUKO
Something's not right here. That pile of rocks.

FIREBENDER
It looks like there's been a landslide, sir.

ZUKO
Land doesn’t slide uphill. Those rocks didn’t move naturally -- my uncle’s been captured by Earthbenders.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Aang chases the spirit monster (with Sokka in its clutches) through the forest at high speed. They make quick turns, and dodge the trees and heavy growth, Aang flying under vines, between branches, etc.

SOKKA
Aang, over here!

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - CONTINUOUS

They cross into the scorched part of the forest. Without as many trees to dodge and avoid, Aang is able to catch up to the monster. He flies above it. Sokka reaches his hand up.

SOKKA
Help!

AANG
Hang on, Sokka!

Aang reaches out, and flies closer and closer. But just as his hand GRABS Sokka’s hand, Sokka and the monster FADE AWAY and disappear.

Aang immediately loses his balance, drops from the sky, and CRASHES to the ground. He lies unconscious beside a large stone MONOLITH, carved to resemble a panda bear (think “Easter Island” not renaissance sculpture.)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - A FEW HOURS LATER

Aang comes to. He bolts upright.

AANG
Sokka!

He looks around. He rubs his head.

AANG (CONT’D)
I’ve failed...

EXT. PATH - SIMULTANEOUS

The four Earth Kingdom soldiers and the captain ride on their horses. Uncle Iroh is on the back of one of their horses, his hands SHACKLED and pinned to his chest by a length of chain, like an improvised straight jacket. His feet are tied together with THICK ROPES.

UNCLE IROH
Where are you taking me?

CAPTAIN
We are taking you to face justice.

UNCLE IROH
Right. But where specifically?

CAPTAIN
A place you're quite familiar with, actually. You once laid siege to it for six hundred days, but it would not yield to you.

UNCLE IROH
Ah, the Great City of Ba Sing Se.

CAPTAIN
It was greater than you were, apparently.

UNCLE IROH
I acknowledge my defeat at Ba Sing Se. After six hundred days away from home, my men were tired -- and I was tired.
(yawns)
And I am still tired.

He closes his eyes, and falls backwards off the horse, landing with a THUD. The horses stop, and the soldier picks Iroh up off the ground. They put him back where he was on the horse, and resume riding.

Uncle Iroh looks back over his shoulder at something on the road behind them -- his SANDAL, which he removed while he was on the ground. He SMILES knowingly.

EXT. VILLAGE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Katara sits on the ground. The old wanderer comes outside, a blanket wrapped around his shoulders.

OLD WANDERER
I’m sure they’ll be back.

KATARA
I know.

OLD WANDERER
You should get some rest.

He removes the blanket from his shoulders, and gives it to Katara. Just then, Aang stumbles out of the woods behind them -- they cannot see him. He slowly walks toward them, overhearing their conversation.

KATARA
(trying to believe it)
Everything’s going to be okay.

Katara closes her eyes and holds tightly to Sokka’s boomerang.

OLD WANDERER
(comforting)
Your brother is in good hands. I would be shocked if the Avatar returned without him.

Hearing this, Aang SLUMPS his shoulders. He’s going to disappoint them.

AANG
Katara.

But Katara doesn’t turn around.

AANG (CONT’D)
Katara, I lost him.

He walks over to her, but neither she nor the old wanderer respond.

OLD WANDERER
The sun is rising -- perhaps he will return soon.

AANG
What? No, I’m right here!

As DAWN breaks, we see that Aang is in DIFFERENT HUES and SLIGHTLY SHIMMERY. Aang notices this.

AANG (CONT'D)
(realizing)
I'm in the spirit world.

EXT. PATH - MORNING

In the same place where Uncle Iroh fell from the horse, Zuko rides up on his rhino. He dismounts and kneels in the road. He picks up Uncle Iroh's sandal and smells it. He makes a face.

ZUKO
Yep, that's Uncle Iroh.

He climbs back on his rhino and continues along the path.

EXT. VILLAGE - MORNING

Aang sits next to Katara, who has fallen asleep under the blanket.

AANG
I'll figure this out, Katara, I promise. Like they said, I'm the bridge between the worlds, right? All I have to do is... figure out what I have to do.

He looks down for a moment. Then he cheers up.

AANG (CONT'D)
But once I do that, no problem!

Appa walks up and NUZZLES Katara.

APPA
(MOURNFUL BELLOWS)

AANG
Appa! Hey buddy, I'm right here! But I guess you can't see me either.

APPA
(SAD BELLOWS)

Appa's nuzzling wakes Katara. She pats him on the nose.

KATARA
It's okay, Appa. Don't worry. I'm sure they're on their way back. I bet they even found you a bunch of moon peaches, for a treat.

Aang gets up, frustrated. He twirls his staff and walks away from Katara as he wonders aloud.

AANG
What am I supposed to do? Avatar Roku, how can I talk to you?

Aang notices something in the distance... a small speck. He SQUINTS to see what it is.

AANG (CONT'D)
Sokka?

As it gets closer, Aang sees that it's a DRAGON, and it's coming at him very quickly.

AANG (CONT'D)
That's definitely not Sokka.

He snaps open his glider to fly away, but instead he FLOPS to the ground.

AANG (CONT'D)
(surprised)
What?

He gets up, and tries an Airbending move, but nothing happens.

AANG (CONT'D)
I can't Airbend in the spirit world!

Aang turns to face the oncoming dragon.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Aang stands his ground as the massive and beautiful dragon approaches. It lands in front of him. (The dragon should have similar HUES and/or SHIMMERY EFFECT as “spirit-world” Aang.)

AANG
You don’t know where Sokka is, do you?

It takes a step towards Aang, and Aang cautiously takes a step back. Then the dragon opens its mouth and moves it forward toward Aang, and Aang tries to block him with his staff -- one of the dragon’s mouth tendrils reaches and touches Aang’s hand, and as it does, there is a BRIGHT BLUE FLASH as the dragon sends Aang a vision.

AANG’S VISION:

The dragon flies through the sky, carrying a rider. The rider is Avatar Roku.

BACK TO SCENE

AANG
You’re Avatar Roku’s animal guide! Like Appa is to me.

The dragon SNORTS.

AANG (CONT’D)
I need to save my friend and I don’t know how. Is there some way for me to talk to Roku?

The dragon sits in front of Aang. Aang climbs on board. Katara walks by, obliviously.

AANG (CONT’D)
I’ll be back, Katara.
(to dragon)
Take me to Roku!

The dragon LEAPS from the ground, and into the air, carrying Aang.

EXT. SKY - MOMENTS LATER

The dragon and Aang race through the sky, over the forest, and the scorched forest.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Uncle Iroh and his captors climb up a hillside. As they reach the top, Iroh's eyes widen: he sees the dragon carrying Aang approaching. Uncle Iroh DUCKS as the dragon buzzes them, while the others obliviously have no reaction.

CAPTAIN
What's the problem?

UNCLE IROH
Nothing...

But Uncle watches as the dragon flies away into the distance. Then he gets an idea.

UNCLE IROH (CONT'D)
Actually, there is a bit of a problem. My old joints are feeling sore and achy, and these shackles are too loose.

CAPTAIN
Too loose?

UNCLE IROH
That's right. The cuffs are loose and they jangle around and bump my wrists. It would help me if you would tighten them, so they wouldn't shake around so much.

CAPTAIN
(shaking his head)
Very well. Corporal, tighten the prisoner's hand cuffs.

The Earthbender soldier goes to Iroh to tighten the cuffs. But as his hands get near Iroh's, Iroh suddenly GRABS the soldier's hand and PINS it to the cuff, which we see Iroh has super-heated to RED HOT.

EARTHBENDER SOLDIER #1
(SCREAMS)

Iroh jumps to the ground, landing on his side. His feet still bound, he kicks a blast of Firebending near the horses, STARTLING them and causing them to buck. A couple riders are thrown off. Uncle then rolls himself toward the edge of the ridge and then rolls like a log rapidly down the hill. The Captain attempts to regain control of the situation with his screaming soldier and bucking horse.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Aang flies over the ocean on Roku's dragon, at incredible speed. They slow down over an unusual, crescent-shaped volcanic island. In the center of the island is a temple.

EXT. CRESCENT ISLAND - DAY

The dragon flies straight through the temple walls and into the temple...

AANG
Hey, what are you doing?! (SCREAMS)

INT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

The dragon flies through the temple, passing through a massive and ORNATE DOOR into...

INT. TEMPLE - AVATAR SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

At the center of the temple, the dragon stops, and Aang dismounts. It is a large, vaguely Stonehenge-like room. There is a statue of Roku. Aang approaches the statue.

AANG
I don't understand. This is just a statue of Roku.

Aang turns to the dragon. He reaches out his tendril and gives Aang another vision.

INSERT: Sozin's Comet rips across the sky, leaving a wake of fiery apocalyptic destruction.

AANG (CONT'D)
Is that what Roku wants to talk to me about? A comet?
(beat)
When can I talk to him?

The dragon doesn't answer. Aang looks around at the room. He sees a red shaft of light, produced when the Sun shines through a gigantic ruby built into the shrine, landing on a carving several feet to the left of the statue.

The dragon approaches Aang, who reaches out to touch it. There is a BRIGHT BLUE FLASH and the dragon sends Aang another vision.

AANG'S VISION:

In fast time-lapse motion, Aang sees that as days pass and the sun sets, the red light from the ruby moves in an arc towards the statue.

BACK TO SCENE

AANG
It's a calendar -- and the light will reach Roku on the solstice. So that's when I'll be able to speak to Roku?

A beat.

AANG (CONT'D)
But I can't wait that long! I need to save Sokka now!

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Uncle continues to roll crazily down the hill. The Captain does an Earthbending move, causing a medium landslide to begin. The landslide catches up to Uncle Iroh, covering him in dirt and rocks. The captain and one of the soldiers catch up to him.

EARTHBENDER SOLDIER #1
He is too dangerous, Captain! We can't just carry him to the capital, we have to do something now.

CAPTAIN
I agree. He must be dealt with immediately, and severely.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Appa rides through the sky, with Katara aboard.

KATARA
It's no use Appa, I don't see them anywhere. Our best hope is to go back to the village and wait.

They turn back towards the village.

EXT. PATH - DAY

Zuko tracks his Uncle. He sees hoofprints, and can see where the trail leads. Then he looks up and sees Appa flying in the distance, going in the opposite direction.

ZUKO
The Avatar...

He starts to follow Appa. Then he stops, and hesitates. Zuko’s eyes narrow.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Aang is on the dragon, again racing through the sky, over the ocean...

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - LATER

Still on the dragon, they race through the forest. Aang sees the stone panda monolith -- and on top of it, Aang sees HIMSELF, sitting in a lotus position, his eyes glowing in the “Avatar state”. The dragon, with spirit-world Aang aboard, picks up speed, heading straight toward the monolith.

AANG
Wow. (NERVOUS REACTION)

Aang braces himself as the dragon flies right through glowing-eye Aang, who closes his eyes. A moment later, he opens his eyes, and they’re normal. Aang is back. He jumps off the monolith, to the ground. He turns around and looks up at it.

After a beat, he whips open his glider and takes off.

EXT. VILLAGE - SUNSET

Aang flies back into town. Katara, Appa, and Momo are overjoyed to see him. Again, we see villagers peering out through their windows. Katara throws her arms around him.

KATARA
You’re back!

Then she realizes something. Fear washes over her face.

KATARA (CONT’D)
Where’s Sokka?

AANG
I’m not sure.

The last sliver of the Sun slips beneath the horizon. Behind Aang, the black and white spirit monster materializes.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DUSK

Uncle Iroh’s hands are pinned to a rock. The chains that formerly bound his hands to his chest are now wrapped around a huge rock. (About 6 feet of chain.)

CAPTAIN
These dangerous hands... must be crushed.

He raises a huge rock above Iroh’s hands, but just as he releases the rock, someone kicks it away -- it’s Zuko. With his next move, Zuko severs the shackles that bind his uncle.

UNCLE IROH
Excellent form, Prince Zuko.

ZUKO
You taught me well.

They now see they are surrounded by the five Earthbenders.

CAPTAIN
Surrender yourselves. It’s five against two, you are clearly outnumbered.

Uncle Iroh smiles.

UNCLE IROH
Ah... that’s true but you are clearly outmatched.

With that, he delivers an awesome Firebending move. A fight commences in which Uncle uses the chains still attached to his wrists as weapons. [Fight to be written, but shouldn’t be too long.] Zuko and Uncle Iroh are victorious.

ZUKO
Now would you please put on some clothes?

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Aang turns to face the black and white monster. It ROARS with anger. Aang walks toward it, slowly.

KATARA
Aang, what are you doing? Run!

The spirit monster screams and gnashes its teeth. Aang reaches out and touches it with his hand, and there is a BRIGHT BLUE FLASH.

AANG'S VISION: For a brief moment, Aang sees the spirit as a PANDA BEAR.

BACK TO SCENE

The spirit monster roars, and gnashes its teeth.

AANG
You're the spirit of this forest. Now I understand -- you're upset and angry because your home was burned down.

The monster becomes calmer and looks at Aang.

AANG (CONT'D)
When I saw the forest had burned I was sad and upset. But my friend gave me hope that the forest would grow back.

He produces the acorn that Katara gave him, and places it on the ground in front of the spirit. Before his eyes, the monster TRANSFORMS into the panda he saw in his vision. The panda takes the acorn, and AMBLES away. As he walks into the distance, BAMBOO SPROUTS behind him in his path, and quickly grows into a TALL THICKET. Several people STUMBLE out of the thicket... including Sokka. (Once the people are out, the bamboo fades out and disappears into the spirit world.)

KATARA
Sokka!

Katara runs over to Sokka and hugs him. Meanwhile, other villagers come out and embrace their returning loved ones.

SOKKA
What happened?

AANG
You were trapped in the spirit world for twenty-four hours -- how are you feeling?

SOKKA
Like I seriously need to use the bathroom.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

LEADER
Thank you, Avatar. If only there were a way to repay you for what you've done.

SOKKA
You could give us some supplies and some money.

KATARA
Sokka!

SOKKA
What, we need stuff.

The leader bows.

LEADER
It would be an honor to help you prepare for your journey.

As the leader walks away, Katara turns to Aang.

KATARA
I'm so proud of you, Aang. You figured out what to do all on your own.

AANG
Actually, I did have a little help. And there's something else...

Aang looks away.

INSERT: Sozin's Comet, the same apocalyptic scene as before.

SOKKA
What is it?

AANG
I need to talk to Roku. And I think I found a way to contact his spirit.

KATARA
That's great!

SOKKA
Creepy, but great.

AANG
There’s a temple on a crescent shaped island -- and if I go there on the solstice, I’ll be able to speak with him.

KATARA
But the solstice is tomorrow.

AANG
Yeah, and there’s one more problem. The island is in the Fire Nation.

Off of their reactions...

CHYRON: TO BE CONTINUED

END OF SHOW